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## **Gov. Gregoire announces recovery funding for Metaline drinking water project**

*Project first of its kind in Washington*

**OLYMPIA** – Gov. Chris Gregoire with Department of Health Secretary Mary Selecky today announced the Town of Metaline as the first water system in the state to sign a loan deal to use recovery funds for badly needed drinking water improvements. The Pend Oreille County system is among 24 projects receiving stimulus money to pay for drinking water system improvement work that will help protect public health.

“It’s rewarding to see this money put to good use, creating jobs in places that desperately need economic help, and on projects that will protect people in Washington communities,” said Gregoire. “Everyone needs safe, reliable drinking water, and this project in Metaline is the first of two dozen projects that will ensure quality drinking water in our state.”

The loan to Metaline is part of the \$38.5 million economic recovery fund package for drinking water infrastructure projects in Washington state. The state Department of Health and the Public Works Board chose 24 projects to receive the stimulus funds.

“This is good news for the people of Metaline,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky, “and we’re working hard to make similar progress on the other projects around the state that have been approved under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These are important projects, and the need is real, so we’re pressing ahead to get the work underway.”

Metaline, a community of 175 residents, was devastated in March when its major employer, the Pend Oreille Mine, closed. About 150 people in the north Pend Oreille County area left to find work elsewhere. The population loss has staggered the local economy.

Under the recovery act, Metaline is receiving a \$600,000 loan to replace a water-filtering system that’s more than 50 years old. The loan won’t have to be repaid because the community qualifies as an economically distressed area. The money is being paired with a \$980,000 federal

Community Development Block Grant to pay for a new 319,800-gallon water storage tank, a new filtration plant, and new water service meters.

Site excavation for the water project began this month, creating a half-dozen jobs. Contractors will hire more people as the work progresses.

Metairie Mayor Trent Hanson said the project will really make a difference for the community and will create jobs. "We've managed to put people to work who are from the area and keep the money moving in the area," Hanson said. "That's a benefit for us all."

*Washington State is administering the federal Recovery Act investments with an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability. [Gov. Gregoire created a new Web site](http://www.recovery.wa.gov) (www.recovery.wa.gov) enabling every Washingtonian to see where their tax dollars are going and hold government accountable for the results. On the federal level, President Barack Obama has appointed Vice President Joe Biden to oversee all states' recovery efforts and to root out waste and fraud. This combined oversight will ensure taxpayer dollars are put to good use and recharge the economy.*

*Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a healthy dose of information.*

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